

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 SNM-02 AID-05 IO-10 ISO-00 (ISO) W

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R 141530Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2965

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0982

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, SY

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL TRAINING

REF: STATE 49067

1. EMBASSY NARCOTICS CONTROL OFFICER DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT COURSE WITH THE DIRECTOR OF SYRIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE, MR. ANIS SHAARANI. SHAARANI EXPRESSED GREAT INTEREST BUT SAID THAT THE REQUIREMENT THAT SARG PAY INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PRESENTS DIFFICULTY. HE SAID HE WOULD TRY TO ARRANGE SARG FINANCING TRANSPORTATION FOR ONE, POSSIBLY TWO OFFICIALS. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD BE DELIGHTED NAME FIVE CANDIDATES IF US WOULD ASSUME TRAVEL COSTS.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT BENEFITS WE EXPECT FROM PARTICIPATION SARG OFFICIALS WOULD JUSTIFY US FUNDING TRAVEL COSTS FOR THOSE CANDIDATES WHICH SARG UNABLE TO FINANCE. BESIDES OBVIOUS BENEFIT TO OUR INTEREST IN CONTROLLING DRUG TRAFFICKING AND DEVELOPING COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH SYRIAN CUSTOMS, THERE WOULD BE ADDITIONAL BENEFIT TO US OF HAVING GROUP OF SARG OFFICIALS WHO HAVE HAD USEFUL WORK-RELATED TOUR IN US. THEIR PRECEDENT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN REDUCING SARG CIVIL OFFICIALDOM'S GENERAL UNEASINESS AND LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH THE UNITED STATES, THE HERITAGE OF OUR SEVEN-YEAR BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH SYRIA.

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3. FYI. AS EMBASSY/AID LEARNED IN NEGOTIATING

FIRST USG GRANT AGREEMENT FOR SYRIAN PARTICIPANT TRAINING IN LATE FEBRUARY, SARG HAS GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO FOREIGN FINANCING OF TRANSPORTATION FOR TECHNICAL AND EXPERT TRAINING UNDER ITS AGREEMENTS WITH EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE. FOR THIS REASON, EMBASSY/AID HAVE AGREED TO FINANCE TRANSPORTATION TO US OF SYRIAN PARTICIPANTS UNDER THIS AGREEMENT, AT LEAST FOR FIRST YEAR. END FYI.

4. AT TIME OF CONVERSATION, SHAARANI HAD NOT YET RECEIVED NOTICE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO MFA OFFERING COURSE. WE SHOULD ALLOW TIME FOR THIS TO REACH HIM AND ALSO FOR HIM TO CHECK POSSIBLE SARG FUNDING OF TRAVEL. WOULD APPRECIATE, HOWEVER, ADVANCE APPROVAL THAT USG WILL FUND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FOR UP TO FIVE SYRIAN CANDIDATES IN THE EVENT SARG PROVES UNABLE TO DO SO.
MURPHY

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